

Operation Pacific Nightingale III

Medevac exercise provides tactical training on Korean peninsula

By Senior Airman Francesca Popp
51st Fighter Wing Public Affairs

OSAN AIR BASE, Korea – Combine four days of flying multiple aircraft types, more than 200 people from three U.S. military services and our host nation and what do you get? Some may think a logistical nightmare, but what resulted were major payoffs in training and joint, combined and total-force cooperation during a peninsula-wide exercise April 13 through Monday.

Pacific Nightingale III's primary objective was to practice the tactical movement of injured and sick patients from a combat or disaster area in Korea to a mobile staging facility or contingency hospital, and eventually to a permanent hospital off the peninsula, according to Maj. Brian Anderson, 7th Air Force medical plans and operations chief.

To meet this objective, a large part of Pacific Nightingale consisted of specialized training for the people who would be the primary responders during an aeromedical evacuation contingency or humanitarian operation here in Korea.

"The exercise provided training and orientation for aircrews, both aeromedical and flight crews, at the various air fields they might have to fly into during an aeromedical evacuation contingency," Anderson said. "It also gave us the opportunity to train organic medical crews - the people who are stationed or deployed here - how to prepare aerovac patients in a combat setting."

Due to the nature of the exercise, Pacific Nightingale provided training that really can't be gained under other circumstances.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Morrison, 8th CS/VI

Members of the 8th Medical Group scramble to move a simulated casualty to a C-130 Hercules from the 95th ALS, General Mitchell Air Reserve Base, Milwaukee, Wis. for evacuation during Pacific Nightingale III. The 8th MDG is one of the units taking part in Exercise Pacific Nightingale III, a joint Pacific exercise testing each wing's aeromedical evacuation ability.

"It provided field training on how to receive and move the kinds of patients we would see in a wartime environment or natural disaster," said Capt. Timothy Martinez, 51st Contingency Hospital commander at Kimhae Air Base. "This training is absolutely vital to our wartime mission."

This sense of urgency was another aspect Pacific Nightingale III exercised when it did a press-to-test of the Air

Force's ability to quickly position forces and equipment where needed.

"We pulled people from their normal day-to-day environments and moved them into a field situation close to a natural disaster or a combat area. Then we made them stand up their wartime task, which is the care of patients and the movement of severely injured patients," Martinez said, "both of which happened in a short period of time, providing the

realism of practicing something they can't do at home."

According to Tech. Sgt. John Raleigh, 8th Medical Group Medical Readiness Training NCO-in-charge, it is especially important Kunsan medics practice this evacuation part of their mission.

"We're limited of the kind of care we can give here," he said. "In a disaster or combat situation, we may receive a mass amount of patients at one time and we're limited on facilities and supplies. So it is important that we are able to get patients to a place where they can get the care they need."

Kunsan medics transported 60 simulated patients on board a C-130 Hercules.

Another twist to the exercise was its joint and combined training aspect.

"This is truly a total-force exercise," said Col. Tom Barbera, 7th AF surgeon. "We've brought reservists and active-duty medical people to a forward-deployed contingency hospital in Korea; plus we're working with active-duty and reserve units in the aeromedical evacuation process, just like we would do a real contingency."

This first-time interaction and training during Pacific Nightingale III wasn't limited to the active-duty and reserve component Air Force medics. A Mobile Aeromedical Staging Facility at Kwang Ju Air Base was also established.

"The MASF are holding areas, where patients are kept until aircraft are available to transfer them for additional care,"

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Pride of the Pack



Job: 8th Medical Group Family Advocacy Program NCO-in-charge

Hometown: Cameron, Wis.

Follow-on: Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska

Family: Parents John and Judy and five sisters

Hobbies: Running, volleyball, hiking, snowboarding, watching movies and acting goofy

Words of wisdom: "If you think there's nothing to do here, you're not looking hard enough."

The Pride of the Pack is nominated by his or her commander, first sergeant or supervisor, or any Wolf Pack member, for outstanding value to their unit and dedication to the mission. To nominate a Wolf Pack member, send a nomination to the individual's group commander.



Staff Sgt. David Graf